

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment After Final ("Amendment") in reply to the final Office Action mailed September 24, 2003.

In this Amendment, Applicants propose to amend claims 1, 22, and 33 to better define the present invention.

Before entry of this Amendment, claims 1-36 were pending in this application. After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-36 remain pending in this application.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to claims 1, 22, and 33. No new matter was introduced.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone conference of March 19, 2004. The amended claims and the remarks below are consistent with the issues discussed and agreements reached during the interview.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 8, 10-12, 15, 16, 19-21, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,040,431 to Sakino et al. ("Sakino"). Further, the Examiner rejected claims 2-7, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 22-32, and 34-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakino in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,149,967 in view of Otaka ("Otaka").

In the final Office Action, the Examiner states:

"Sakino et al. teach a positioning stage system and a method for positioning comprising a support platform (5), x-direction and y-direction linear motors (col. 1, lines 23-26), an x-member coupled to the x-direction linear motor and to the support platform to move the platform (5) in an x-direction along the y-member (4), wherein the y-member is coupled to the y-direction linear motor to support the platform to move in a y-direction along the x-member, and a

slide attached to the support platform and slidably engaged with the x-member and the y-member wherein all three are configured to support the weight of the platform (col. 1, line 17 - col. 2, line 37, col. 3 line 60 - col. 4, line 25, and Fig. 1).”

final Office Action, page 2. Additionally, the Examiner states,

“Applicant argues that X stage movable member and the support platform are not slidably engaged. However, mounting plate (51A), which can be viewed as part of the support platform, is engaged with X stage (5). This setup functions to guide movement of the X stage in the X-axis direction (col. 4, lines 26-42), thus achieving slidable engagement.”

final Office Action, page 5. Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 22, Sakino fails to teach a support platform that is configured to slide directly on the X-member in the Y-direction and is configured to slide directly on the Y-member in the X-direction, as recited in the amended claims. Applicants respectfully submit that if the Examiner construes mounting plate 51A as part of the support platform, the mounting plate 51A does not slide directly on X stage member 5, as mounting plate 51A and X stage member 5 are rigidly connected to one another. See Sakino, Figs. 1 and 2, and col. 4, lines 27-30 (disclosing, “The X stage 5 has ends in the Y-axis direction to which two hydrostatic gas or air bearing mounting plates 51a and 51b are fixed, respectively.”) Applicants’ emphasis added. Instead, nothing in Sakino teaches a support platform that is configured to slide directly on an X-member in the Y-direction and is configured to slide directly on a Y-member in the X-direction.

Similarly and with respect to independent claim 33, Sakino also fails to teach sliding the support platform directly on the X-member in the Y-direction and sliding the support platform directly on the Y-member in the X-direction, as recited in the amended claim.

Additionally, Otaka fails to overcome the above-noted deficiencies of Sakino and is not relied upon by the Examiner for any such teaching. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejections based on Otaka should also be withdrawn.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of amended claims 1, 22, and 33—and claims 2-21, 23-32, and 34-36, which depend therefrom—be withdrawn.

Summary

In summary, Applicants submit that none of the cited references, including Sakino, Otaka, or any other art of record, taken alone or in any proper combination, teaches or suggests Applicants' claimed invention.


The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 408-4157 if the Examiner deems that a telephone conversation would further the prosecution of the application.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 24, 2004

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Attachments: Replacement Drawing Sheets (5 pages, Figs. 1-9)